

Judge Gives Life Sentence To Md. Slayer

**'Time to Speak Out'
Against Death Penalty,
County Jurist Says**

By Walter B. Douglas
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A Montgomery county judge, who said she felt "the time has come that someone must speak out in Maryland," prescribed a life sentence yesterday for a murderer she could have sent to the gas chamber.

Circuit Court Judge Kathryn L. Shook noted that she was sentencing 25-year-old Charles S. Stull for "a crime that to my mind practically cries to heaven for vengeance."

Stull was convicted in April of shooting Donald L. Snyder, 67, in the back of his head at Snyder's country store north of Rockville 18 months ago. The jury failed to recommend leniency, leaving to Judge Shook the option of sending Stull to prison or to death. Under terms of the sentence, Stull will be eligible for parole in 15 years.

Defense Attorney William C. Miller had pleaded his client innocent by reason of insanity, arguing that Stull was an emotionally unstable alcoholic at the time of the slaying.

"We like to believe we have come a long way from the horrors of capital punishment," Judge Shook told Stull as he stood unblinking before her. "Now life is regarded by all thinking persons as something that should be preserved under all circumstances."

"I have been advised against this," Judge Shook continued, "But I feel the time has come to speak out in Maryland. No one has ever asked me if I have conscientious scruples against capital punishment. Up to a month ago, I would not have known what answer I would give . . . At this point in my life, I do have conscientious scruples."

Noting that Stull had promised to hang himself if sentenced to life imprisonment, Judge Shook urged him to seek a useful life behind bars despite his anguish at losing "the beauties of springtime, winter, summer and fall that you enjoyed in your boyhood."